

## Governor Code of Conduct



### Aims

This policy aims to set and maintain standards of conduct that we expect all governors to follow.

By creating this policy, we aim to ensure that governors carry out their role with honesty and integrity, and help us to ensure our school is an environment where everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect.

The code is based on [the Governance Handbook](#) and the Department for Education's [guidance on the school governance regulations 2013](#). It should be read alongside our constitutional documents (e.g. our instrument of government, standing orders and any scheme of delegation).

Please note that this code of conduct is not exhaustive. If situations arise that are not covered by this code, governors will use their judgement and act in the best interests of the school and its pupils.

### The purpose of the governing body

The governing body is the school's accountable body. It is responsible for the conduct of the school and for promoting high standards. The governing body aims to ensure that children are attending a successful school which provides them with a good education and supports their well-being.

#### The Governing Body:

- Sets the strategic direction of the school by:
  - Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
  - Agreeing the policy framework for achieving those aims and objectives
  - Setting targets
  - Agreeing the school improvement strategy which includes approving the budget and agreeing the staffing structure
- Challenges and supports the school by monitoring, reviewing and evaluating:
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the policy framework
  - Progress towards targets
  - The implementation and effectiveness of the school improvement strategy
  - The budget and the staffing structure
- Ensures accountability by:
  - signing off the school's own self-evaluation report
  - responding to Ofsted reports when necessary
  - holding the headteacher to account for the educational and financial performance of the school
  - ensuring parents and pupils are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
  - making available information to the community
- Appoints and performance manages the headteacher who will deliver the aims (through the day to day management of the school, implementation of the agreed policy framework and school improvement strategy, and delivery of the curriculum) and report appropriately to the governing body.

For governing bodies to carry out their role effectively, governors must be:

- Prepared and equipped to take their responsibilities seriously;
- Acknowledged as the accountable body by the lead professionals;
- Supported by the appropriate authorities in that task; and
- Willing and able to monitor and review their own performance.

**The role of a governor**

In law the governing body is a corporate body, which means:

- no governor can act on her/his own without proper authority from the full governing body;
- all governors carry equal responsibility for decisions made, and
- although appointed through different routes (i.e. parents, staff, Local Authority community, foundation), the overriding concern of all governors has to be the welfare of the school as a whole.

**General**

- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the headteacher and the difference and we understand the distinction between the role of a governor and the Headteacher/Senior Leaders
- We are aware of and accept the Nolan seven principles of public life: see appendix
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools. We will always use social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither our personal/professional reputation, nor the school's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- We will promote tolerance of and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs, races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation and we will preserve and develop the character and religious character [if applicable] of the school.
- We will not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- We will operate and make decisions in the best interests of pupils, informed by the views and needs of our key stakeholders (pupils, parents, staff, the local community, Haringey Education Partnership and the local authority).
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.

**Commitment**

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make every effort to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance in full why we are unable to. Apologies will be noted in all cases, but accepted only in exceptional circumstances.

- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- Our visits to school will be arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body and agreed with the headteacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We are committed to actively supporting and challenging the headteacher.
- We accept that in the interests of openness and transparency, our names, terms of office, details of positions of responsibility on the governing body, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website and on [Get information about schools](#)

***At St Michael's C of E Primary School we expect all governors to read papers in advance of meetings, sit on 1 of committee, make an arranged visits during the school day and attend at least 1 governor training session per year.***

### **Relationships**

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted and we will respect each other's views.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community and we will avoid routine involvement on operational matters.
- We will engage meaningfully with the local communities we serve and understand that we are answerable to these stakeholders
- We will support and strengthen school leadership by providing constructive challenge to leaders, and holding them to account
- We will follow the [Equality Act 2010](#), and apply the principles of fairness and equality in everything we do

### **Virtual meetings**

- Under [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#), the governing board can approve alternative arrangements for governors to participate or vote at meetings of the governing board, including, but not limited to, by telephone or video conference. This includes at full governing board meetings and committee meetings.

We will attend virtual meetings if required using the virtual meeting platform agreed by the governing body

To ensure confidentiality and the smooth running of the meeting, governors attending virtually will:

- Attend the whole meeting
- Attend with the webcam/video switched on where possible
- Focus on the business of the meeting in the same way as if they were attending in person
- Remain on mute unless they are speaking
- Prevent unauthorised individuals overhearing conversations (for example, by using headphones)
- Be mindful of their surroundings – ensure that our remote meeting attendance is in an appropriate quiet room and not in a public place.

- Ask questions during the meeting by waiting for the presenting speaker to finish and invite questions from governors.
- Behave appropriately in line with the instructions given by the host of the meeting
- If we need to leave the meeting whilst a presentation is taking place, we will explain this using the 'chat' facility of the online platform so the Clerk can note that we are not present

#### Difficulties joining a virtual meeting:

- If after all reasonable efforts it does not prove possible for a governor/trustee to participate by telephone or video conference, the meeting may still proceed with its business provided it is otherwise quorate.
- The clerk will record in the minutes that the governor/trustee in question attempted to participate but was unable to do so.

#### Recording the meeting:

- The clerk may wish to record the meeting to aid them when writing the minutes.
- At the start of the meeting the clerk will make sure all governors agree to the meeting being recorded.
- Where approval is granted, it is the clerk alone who has permission to record the meeting. No one else has authority to record the meeting unless they have explicit authority from governors/to do so.
- The recording will be handled in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and once it is no longer needed the recording will be deleted.

#### Quorum:

- All governors attending virtually count towards the quorum.
- If individual governors lose connection to the meeting, they will no longer count towards the quorum. The meeting can continue undisrupted if it is otherwise quorate.
- If the meeting becomes inquorate then discussions may continue, but no votes can be held unless the meeting is quorate.
- If all governors lose connection to the meeting then the clerk will postpone the meeting and reschedule. Where this is not possible, the clerk will send the matters for consideration via email, and will expect comments from governors within the timeframe specified in the email.

#### **Confidentiality**

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school and will not disclose such matters publicly
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- Our commitment to confidentiality does not overrule (1) our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm or (2) any other over-riding legal duty that we have to disclose information.

#### **Conflicts of interest**

- We will record and publish any pecuniary or other business interest that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests. (This will include Associate Members)
- We will declare any pecuniary interest - or a personal interest which could be perceived as a conflict of interest - in a matter under discussion at a meeting and offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.

#### **Breach of this code of practice**

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the governing body should only use suspension as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways;
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate;

- We understand that any allegation of a material breach of this code of practice by any governor shall be raised at a meeting of the governing body, and, if agreed to be substantiated by a majority of governors, shall be minuted and can lead to consideration of suspension from the governing body.
- We are aware of the provisions of regulation 15(1) of the School Governance (Procedures) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, which pertain to the grounds for suspension as a school governor, Schedule 6 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007 and Schedule 4 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, relating to the disqualifications from the role of school governor (held as a separate document) and the School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013.

**Data protection**

- We will follow the school’s information security processes and measures and data protection policy (if applicable) when using, storing, sharing and disposal of personal data.
- Our commitment to data protection does not overrule our duty to report child protection concerns to the appropriate channel where we believe a child is at risk of harm.

**Personal data breaches**

- We will inform the school’s data protection officer immediately if we believe that there has been a personal data breach

**Social media**

We will

- Abide by the requirements set out in our school’s social media policy.
- Uphold the reputation of the school at all times
- Maintain a professional presence online and carefully consider how we interact with the school community
- Review privacy settings regularly to make sure we are happy with the information about us that is publicly available
- Report any incidents of harassment we experience, or see towards governors to the chair of governors and the headteacher
- Join any parent groups solely in our capacity as parent, being mindful of our role as governors and abiding by rules of confidentiality (applies only to governors who are parents of children at the school).

We will **not**:

- Accept friend requests from pupils and not join any private parent groups associated with the school (except in the case of governors who are parents of children in the school- see above)
- Disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- Make comments online about any members of the governing board or school community
- Post any inappropriate/offensive language, images or comments on social media that may bring us or the school into disrepute

**The Governing Body of St Michael’s C of E Primary adopted this code of practice on 22 September 2021.** Governors will sign the Code at the first governing body meeting of each school year.

**Undertaking:**

As a member of the Governing Body I will always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; I will do all I can to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos; I will never say or do anything publicly that would embarrass the school, the Governing Body, the Headteacher or staff.

Signed .....

Printed name .....

Date: .....

### **Appendix 1: The Seven Principles of Public Life**

*(originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).*

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

#### **Related areas/Policies:**

- Role Profile for all governors

COVID-19 specific guidance on virtual meetings can be found:

- The Department for Education's (DfE's) [school governance update – March 2020](#)
- The DfE's guidance on [actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [The School Discipline \(Pupil Exclusions and Reviews\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

This policy complies with the following legislation:

- [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) (regulations 13 and 14)

- [The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#) (regulation 3)